

REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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Cohn's Comment



In this information age, where technology can bring us real-time news and updates from around the globe, why don't our first responders - law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel - have the ability to communicate with each other? If the catastrophes such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina have taught us anything, it is that communication saves lives. To protect the lives and livelihoods of our citizens, especially the young, elderly and disabled, we must make sure our first responders can readily communicate with one another. To attain this level of safety, we must create a regionalized, interoperable communications system.

We all grew up watching television shows where the police got into trouble and simply picked up a radio to have help instantly. Both television and the movies repeat this common misconception. Some first responders use five or six radios in their car. Based on where they are, a first responder would use one radio or another to communicate with different and disparate systems. In some jurisdictions, public safety officers do not possess even a simple and reliable

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Energy Efficiency Focus at Farmer's Market

CAMPBELL — Assembly Member Rebecca Cohn conducted Sidewalk Office Hours at the Farmer's Market in downtown Campbell on Sunday, November 20, 2005. The theme of the event was energy conservation. Energy costs are predicted to rise this winter due to the Gulf Coast hurricanes. Cohn distributed 1,400 free energy efficient light bulbs to the public. The light bulbs were donated by Phillips Electronics Corporation. "This is an opportunity to educate and encourage the public to conserve energy use as we enter a peak usage time of the year," said Assembly Member Cohn.

Sidewalk Office Hours are conducted frequently at farmer's markets located in Assembly District



Cohn discusses energy saving tips

24 by Cohn and her staff. For information regarding where and when the next Sidewalk Office Hours will be held, please contact Jon Kessler at (408) 282-8920 or Jon.Kessler@asm.ca.gov ♦

"Stranger Danger" Set for Almaden Area

"Stranger Danger" Camp and Children's Safety Resource Faire
Saturday, December 10, 2005 from 10 AM to 2 PM
Carson Elementary School

4245 Meg Drive
San Jose, CA 95136

This event is free and open to the public. Contact Julie Lind at (408) 282-8920 or Julie.Lind@asm.ca.gov for more details ♦

Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention in December

SAN JOSÉ – During the holiday season, statistics show that impaired driving increases significantly. During this period, young drivers and adult male drivers between the ages of 21 and 43 are involved in a significant number of impaired driving collisions.

Impaired driving is an American tragedy. In 2004, over 17,000 people were killed and over 300,000 injured as a result of alcohol-related motor vehicle collisions. Indeed, 40 percent of all the people killed in traffic

crashes died in alcohol related incidents, and 10 percent of the people injured received their injuries under the same circumstances.

Each year, nearly 1.5 million impaired drivers are taken off America's highways as a result of tougher laws, sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols. Stay safe on the streets this holiday season, and remember to use designated drivers accordingly. Lives depend on it, and not just your own. ♦

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radio communications system that would allow them to talk to their own department clearly.

What is interoperability? It is not what the mind first conjures – having a single frequency for all agencies. That would be like trying to have thousands of private conversations inside the Shark Tank. Instead, it is the ability of public safety agencies to talk to one another via radio communication systems - to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed. From an earthquake to child abduction, to the everyday traffic crash, lives are on the line and every second counts.

So why can't they just use a cell phone? I wish it were that simple, but although cell phones are used routinely in day-to-day business, they are not suited to the rigors of the public safety mission. Public safety agencies need dedicated communications systems that can not be overloaded and become unavailable in a critical situation as many commercial mobile phone systems can. Experience has shown us, especially here in the Bay Area with the Oakland Hills Fires and the Loma Prieta Earthquake, that such systems are often the least reliable during critical incidents when public demand overwhelms the systems.

There are a number of reasons that public safety agencies cannot talk to each other. Incompatible and aging communications hardware, limited and fragmented funding, limited and fragmented planning, a lack of coordination and cooperation, and last, but by no means least, a limited and fragmented radio spectrum.

We all agree that seeking an interoperable communications system is very important. Our first responders across the state, county and city levels have all made every possible concession to move the project forward. They sacrificed physical turf and information bandwidth for the common cause. All we have to do now is find the funding. So, how are we going to pay for this system that will make sure that our first responders can talk to one another when the Big One hits the Bay Area? (You'll notice I said when, not if.) One way is to make sure that the Governor hears your concerns and understands how important of an issue this really is to all of us.

Why is this so very important to me? Because I have lived in the Bay Area through most of the major disasters that have hit us and am finally in a position as one of your representatives to make sure that our lives and our livelihoods are protected.

— Rebecca Cohn

Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov ♦

Free Flu Shots Distributed at Health Fair

SAN JOSÉ – Assembly Member Rebecca Cohn hosted a Carnival and Health Fair on November 5, 2005 to help raise awareness of the alarming rates of diabetes and obesity in children, women and seniors. The Fair included free health



San Jose City College Nursing students administer a flu shots.

screenings, community outreach services, and health information from over 25 organizations. The Pacific Coast Farmer's Market Association put on two cooking demonstrations educating attendees on healthy cooking and eating.

Over 200 people attended the Fair at the Sherman Oaks Community Center. An estimated 60 people had their blood pressure evaluated, over 80 people were tested for diabetes and more than 95 people were given a free flu vaccination. ♦

Special Domestic Violence Hearing in Santa Clara

SANTA CLARA – On October 23, 2005 Assembly Member Rebecca Cohn, as Chair of the Select Committee on Domestic Violence held a hearing in Santa Clara. The hearing was regarding domestic violence in the LGBT community. This hearing brought to light the many issues facing LGBT victims of domestic violence when seeking services from traditional battered women's shelters.

Cohn not only founded the Select Committee on Domestic Violence, but has served as the Chair since 2001. As Chair of the committee, she holds informational hearings throughout the state addressing different issues surrounding domestic violence. In the past four years Assembly Member Cohn has held eleven hearings

on topics ranging from batterer intervention programs to habeas relief for battered women.

This past year Cohn held four hearings. Two of the hearings were on domestic violence in the LGBT community, one on the inclusion of domestic violence in the English curriculum at the Campbell Union High School District, and one on the Attorney General's Domestic Violence Report. The hearings were informative and addressed many possible ways to end the cycle of domestic violence.

If you believe there is something that Assembly Member Cohn should hold a hearing on please contact the district office at (408) 282-8920. ♦

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